

your honor, I would like to thank you for allowing me the opportunity before you today. As much as I'm disappointed in myself for being here I'm more thankful for each and every lesson I have learned during these 370 days. There's no excuse as to why I'm here nor anything I can say to justify my actions I know I've let my family, the system and most importantly my son down. I haven't had an easy life my entire 20 years of living and I know that has a very significant part in me getting in trouble with the law. My whole life has been hard I had burdens and things I worried about that no child have. I never got to be a kid and live a normal life, I was a kid born to raise kids. My dad was in and out of prison my whole life, my mom was mentally and physically abusive she was always on drugs and had different men in and out of our house. I did everything I could to protect and take care of my younger two sisters. I had to fill the void of our mother's role. I had been forced to leave my mom's house at 12 years old and ever since then I developed a mentality based on survival. I was 13 years old worrying about where I was going to go after school, how I was going to eat. 17 up until I turned 18



I stayed with so many different people who made me feel unloved, unwelcome, and unsafe. It made me get caught up in the wrong crowds. I started to get into a lot of trouble. I felt so alone and lost I was turning to all the wrong things to fill that void in my life. During these 12 months I have changed in ways I never thought I could. Not waking up next to my son during these 360 days and doing the little things that means so much to us mothers has affected me in so many different ways. Most importantly I'm hurt he has to suffer the consequences for my actions. When I came in my son was 4 months now he's 16 months. I know that nothing I've done is worth my freedom. Your honor, this isn't who I want to be nor the life I want to live. Being incarcerated has shown me what my life will be like if I don't change. I've made so many mistakes in my life and I've had so many days to use this time in the right state of mind to think about everything. This past year has allowed for a great deal of thinking and self reflection for me. I have had time to heal and talk about deeply rooted issues that I had been struggling with and avoiding since a child, issues I wasn't properly addressing. I have forgiven each and everybody who has hurt me most importantly I have forgiven myself. I know the severity of my actions and I'm very aware of the consequences. Being incarcerated has opened my eyes it has made me not want to resort back to old habits.



While addressing issues within myself which may have result in dealing with hurt emotional pain, I can finally say I am at peace. I am ready to live a life without having to be scared, worried without having to live with the burdens that the life I was living came with. I am motivated and ready to work a normal job and make up for so much lost time with my son & Layel. I am excited to finally be able to get my license, build my credit, bring my son to an from school, continue to be sober in the right state of mind. While incarcerated I have earned my High School Diploma and I plan on furthering my education upon release. I want to share my story and keep other young people with so much potential from throwing their life away. The burden that fast money brings you physically & mentally isn't worth it. No amount of \$ is worth being away from my son and family for 6 years, nothing is worth someone else raising my son. It was never worth how many years it can take from you. I have gave my life to god and the outlook I have on life now is diff with everything I do. He has retrained my mind & way of thinking. Your honor I hope you can take everything I said into consideration. I ask that you follow my attorneys recommendation anything longer can



really affect me Mentally. Your Honor I hope you  
Can consider allowing me a second chance anything  
you feel I need I will respect. Your Honor I'm  
only 20 years old I still have alot of life ahead  
of me and even more time to change and do good.  
I take full accountability of my actions. I hope  
you can take all this into consideration and  
allow me this second chance. Thankyou 4 your  
time your Honor

*Marianne Smith*